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May 31, 2000

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VIA EXPRESS MAIL
LABEL NO.: EL 389104170 US

BOX PATENT APPLICATIONS
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: GEDI SYSTEMS INC.
U.S. Patent Application
Inventor: Redling, et al
For : INTERACTIVE TELEVISION
ADVERTISING METHOD
Our Ref.: K41-002 US

Sir:

The above-identified utility patent application is transmitted herewith for filing.

Enclosed are:

1. 17 Page English Appln., including 17 Claims and an Abstract;
2. 3 Sheets of Drawings, Figs. 1-3;
3. Declaration and Power of Attorney - (3 Pgs.);
4. Assignment Document w/ Recordal Cover Sheet;
5. Small Entity Declaration - Small Business; and
6. Check - Amt. \$385.00 - No. 3041 (Filing Fee w/ Assignment - Small Entity).

Vertical text on the left margin, possibly a stamp or reference number.

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
May 31, 2000
Page 2

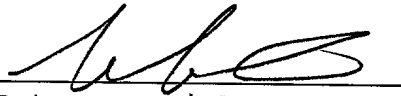
Fee Calculation:

Basic Filing Fee:		\$	690.00
Total No. of Claims Filed:	<u>17</u> (-20) = 45 x \$18.00		
Total No. of Independent Claims Filed:	<u>2</u> (- 3) = 1 x \$78.00		
Multiple Dependent Claims (if present):		\$260.00	
Sub-Total:		\$	690.00
SMALL ENTITY (if applicable)			
REDUCE FILING FEE BY 50%:		\$	345.00
Assignment (if applicable):	-	\$ 40.00	40.00
TOTAL FEE:		\$	385.00

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the above items by having your mail room date-stamp and return the attached postcard with a serial number.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required during the entire pendency of the application to Deposit Account No. 14-1431.

Respectfully submitted,


Peter C. Michalos
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Dated: 5/31/00

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:al
Attachments

Attorney's Docket No. K41-002 US

Applicant or Patentee: Peter M. REDLING et al.
Serial or Patent No.: _____
Filed or Issued: _____
For: INTERACTIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISING METHOD

VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS)
(37 CFR 1.9(f) and 1.27(c) - SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

I hereby declare that I am

- the owner of the small business concern identified below:
- an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below:

NAME OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN GEDI SYSTEMS, INC.
ADDRESS OF CONCERN 442 East 20th Street, Suite M.E.
New York, New York 10009

I hereby declare that the above-identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR 121.12, and reproduced in 37 CFR 1.9(d), for purposes of paying reduced fees to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, in that the number of employees of the concern, including those of its affiliates, does not exceed 500 persons. For purposes of this statement, (1) the number of employees of the business concern is the average over the previous fiscal year of the concern of the persons employed on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis during each of the pay periods of the fiscal year, and (2) concerns are affiliates of each other when either, directly or indirectly, one concern controls or has the power to control the other, or a third party or parties controls or has the power to control both.

I hereby declare that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention, entitled INTERACTIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISING METHOD

by inventor(s) Peter M. REDLING et al.
described in

- the specification filed herewith
- application serial no. _____, filed _____
- patent no. _____, issued _____


If the rights held by the above-identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern or organization having rights to the invention is listed below and no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who could not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c), if that person made the invention, or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e). **NOTE:** Separate verified statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention averring to their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27)

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
 INDIVIDUAL SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
 INDIVIDUAL SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any charge in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b)).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

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 TITLE OF PERSON OTHER THAN OWNER _____
 ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING 422 East 20th Street, Suite M.E.
New York, New York 10009
 SIGNATURE  DATE 5/17/00

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05/31/00

PATENT
K41-002 US

INTERACTIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISING METHOD

FIELD AND BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates generally to the field of interactive television and in particular to a new and useful way to provide selective advertising to a television viewer using an interactive display.

10 Interactive television systems including advertising are generally known in the art. For example, an interactive television system which queries a viewer about their advertising preferences and then presents targeted advertisements is taught by U.S. Patent 6,006,257. A viewer can select from the option of receiving no advertising and pay a fee to watch a program, some advertising and a reduced fee, or interactive advertising and watch the program for
15 free. The interactive advertising requires responses from the viewer, and the advertising can be changed depending on

the responses given by the viewer. A set-top communications box having a cable modem connection is used to connect the television to the program provider and advertiser on the Internet.

5 U.S. Patent 5,761,606 is for an interactive system which provides indicators to a viewer through the vertical blanking intervals (VBI) of a conventional program. The indicator can be a message on the television screen, a blinking light or a sound, among other things. The
10 indicators provide a notice to viewers that more information about the program is available, sometimes through links to Internet or other on-line information providers. If the link is selected, the system connects to the on-line information provider via a digital connection using address
15 information in the indicator link. The information may be displayed on a television using picture-in-picture format.

U.S. Patent 5,585,858 teaches a system for simulcasting an interactive program with a normal television program using the same video signal bandwidth. Graphical questions
20 can be presented to the viewer at the beginning or during the program. A response is made using a keyboard or keypad. The system generates a reply based on the user response. Users can have either a set-top communications box or a personal computer attached to the television to connect
25 interactive components. The system is particularly adapted to educational uses.

U.S. Patent 5,724,103 discloses an interactive information delivery system using the vertical blanking intervals (VBI) of certain television stations to provide
30 data sent with the conventional programming on a computer

monitor. A computer having the necessary decoding hardware can display both the data and the conventional program on the monitor. The data is encoded into the VBI by the television station broadcaster prior to transmission of the conventional program. The patent does not teach displaying the data and conventional program on a television.

U.S. Patent 5,931,908 describes an overlay system for an interactive television program in which overlay items seen on the screen can be selected to activate information retrieval from the Internet. As an example, if an overlay of an actor's name shown in the credits is selected, information about the actor is retrieved from the Internet and displayed to the viewer. Overlays are associated with a particular program so that the available selection options are relevant to the program.

Patents which disclose cable devices for displaying information on a television, include U.S. Patent 5,579,057 for an on-screen display system for a subscriber terminal of a subscription television system. A screen containing a reduced size graphics area (television signal) bordered by a text display is described in columns 10 and 11. The graphics area can be overlapped by the text mode. The patent relates to addressable television cable converter boxes which can use either the cable connection or a telephone connection to order pay-per-view events and other programming. The patent does not teach receiving a signal from the Internet; the television signals are all received from a cable provider via the cable, or the display information comes from graphics stored in a memory in the

converter box.

U.S. Patent 5,524,195 discloses a graphical interface for an on-demand video system having a television, a set-top communications box and a video server. The available user selections are presented as a graphic scene on the television for selection by a user. A CPU in the set-top box generates the graphic scene and interprets user commands. Advertisements are identified as being one of the possible selections presented on the television screen. However, the graphic scene occupies the entire screen, there is no connection to the Internet and television signal programming cannot be viewed concurrently with the graphic scene.

A method of providing directed advertising via a consumer's television is taught by U.S. Patent 5,915,243. First, the consumer is asked a series of questions to determine what advertising is appropriate for the consumer. Then, based on the profile, different promotions and coupons are offered to the consumer through the television. A set-top communications box is connected to the television which is both a signal tuner and transmitter using the cable television lines.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide an interactive television advertising method using a set top box to deliver internet-based advertisements.

It is a further object of the invention to provide

advertising to a consumer which can be selected to obtain more detailed information about an advertised product or service.

5 Accordingly, an advertising method provides a way of marketing products and services from an Internet-based computer server on a television set equipped with a communications box connecting the television to the Internet.

10 A semi-transparent icon is displayed on the television screen by the communications box, preferably in the lower left corner, over the programming from the currently selected channel. The icon periodically changes to resemble different product trademarks or company names. The icon is a link to an advertisement or other product information for the trademark or name. The advertisement can be stored on 15 the communications box in a cache memory or on a disk. Alternatively, the box can be used to retrieve advertising from an Internet server computer when the icon is selected.

20 The box may receive Internet signals over telephone lines, or, in an alternate embodiment, the Internet signal can be transmitted in the sidebands of television channels, such as PBS. The box may adjust the television signal to display the advertisement from the Internet source as a border around the resized television signal, similar to 25 sports tickers and stock tickers used on television stations like ESPN, CNN, CNBC, among others.

Thus, the method comprises providing a communications box for storing and displaying advertising and interpreting user commands, connecting the box to a television set and to 30 the Internet, and using the box to display an icon on the

television screen. The icon is a semi-transparent link superimposed over the television signal programming, that, when selected by sending a user command to the box, causes advertising stored in the box to be displayed on the television. The communications box is updated via the Internet connection, either by the box requesting updates, or an Internet server sending the updates to the box automatically.

The various features of novelty which characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and specific objects attained by its uses, reference is made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which a preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a drawing showing the interconnection of components at a subscriber's location;

Fig. 2 is a schematic drawing showing the interconnection of the components of a system used to practice the invention; and

Fig. 3 is a flowchart showing the steps of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The method of the invention delivers advertising from an Internet-based server to multiple subscribers at

different, distributed locations through a conventional television using a set top box.

Referring to the drawings, in which like reference numerals are used to refer to the same or similar elements, Fig. 1 shows the equipment used to practice the method at a subscriber's location. A television set 10 is connected to a cable box 20 channel selector and to a set top controller or communications box 30 by standard coaxial cables or other known connections. The set top communications box 30 has a cable connection 34 to the cable TV provider company and a phone connection 36 to the local telephone company. A keyboard 40 or other input device is connected to the set top communications box 30.

Some televisions do not require a cable box 20, and so this component may not be present in some installations.

The set top communications box 30 includes a CPU for controlling and processing instructions, a memory and a modem. The memory is used for both long term storage and short term CPU operations, and may include RAM and ROM memory and storage devices such as a magnetic or optical drive. The modem may be a telephone modem or a cable modem. When a cable modem is used, the phone connection 36 is not needed. Signals may be received using the cable connection 34, such as through the vertical blanking index (VBI) portion of channels or other sideband frequencies on stations like PBS. The CPU receives instructions from the keyboard 40 and produces a TV-compatible output to the cable box 20 for display on the television 10.

Television 10 has a screen 12 which displays an image depending on the channel selected using the cable box 20.

Recently, many broadcast and cable television stations have begun displaying a semi-transparent logo 14 identifying the station being watched in the lower right corner of the image presented on the screen 12. The logos 14 typically appear as a white logo with the background determined by the image being displayed, so that the full television image is still displayed.

An advertising icon 50 generated by the set top box 30 is presented to the subscriber in the lower left corner of the screen 12. The advertising icon 50 indicates an interactive link which can be selected by the subscriber using the input device 40 to retrieve advertising information, as described below.

The subscriber's equipment is connected to a central advertising server 70 through the Internet 60 as shown in Fig. 2. The set top communications box 30 uses either a dial-up or other phone line connection through the local telephone company 37, or where available, a cable modem connection through the local cable provider 35 to connect to the Internet 60. As used herein, the term Internet is intended to encompass any large grouping of distributed computers which can share data, as is presently known, or as may be done in the future under a different name.

The method for providing advertising to multiple subscribers shown in the flowchart of Fig. 3 may be practiced using the equipment described above.

As seen in Fig. 3, with reference to Figs. 1 and 2, first the television is turned on 100. The set top communications box 30 begins displaying semi-transparent icons 50 one at a time on the television screen. The icons

50 are preferably recognizable logos or trademarks of
advertisers. The icons 50 each represent the availability
of an advertisement or advertiser information. Following an
icon 50 being displayed, the set top box 30 waits for an
5 input from the subscriber through the input device 40. The
input is whether the subscriber using the television has
selected the icon or not 130 using the input device 40. If
no input is detected after a fixed period, the icon 50 is
changed 120 to a different icon and the new icon is
10 displayed 110 on the TV screen 12. In a preferred
embodiment, the icon 50 changes about every 2 minutes, or
120 seconds.

If an icon 50 is selected by a subscriber, then
advertising information is retrieved 140 and displayed 150,
15 160 on the TV screen 12. The set top box 30 contains link
information for each icon, matching the displayed icon 50 to
related advertising information. The advertising
information may be stored in a local memory device of the
set top box 30 and retrieved on request 142. Alternatively,
20 the advertising information may be requested and retrieved
146 from the central advertising server 70.

In order to maintain a current selection of
advertisements in the memory of the set top box 30,
advertising information and associated display icons 50 may
25 be automatically downloaded 144 to the set top box 30 memory
devices on a regular basis. For example, the information
can be downloaded 144 during the early morning of each day,
or once per week or less frequently, depending on the nature
of the advertising. The automatic download 144 can occur in
30 a number of different ways, including by having the set top

box 30 assigned an Internet address to which the central advertising server 70 transmits when the box 30 has a permanent connection, or by having the set top box 30 make the connection to the server 70, followed by the server downloading 144 the advertising information after it detects the connection.

In a further embodiment, the icons may be transmitted to and stored in the set top communications box 30 separately from the associated advertising information. In such case, the icons are displayed on the screen, and when an icon is selected, the associated advertising information is requested from the central advertising server 70 and transmitted to the set top box 30 for displaying on the television screen 150, 160.

Once the set top box 30 has the advertising information retrieved, the display on the TV can either be changed or reframed 150 to fit the format of the advertising information. If the display will be reframed, the displayed program can be reduced in size and framed in the upper portion of the screen, while the lower portion of the screen is used to display the advertising information 160. Or, the entire TV screen can be used to display the advertising information 160 in place of the regular programming.

Using the method of the invention, a subscriber can view advertising which he/she would like to see on a selective basis. If particular information is known about the subscriber, such as when the set top box 30 is installed in a resort hotel, targeted advertisements can be provided. For example, at a resort in Florida, icons and advertisements for local restaurants and entertainment

facilities may dominate the advertising. At a hotel in New York, the advertisements may focus on Broadway shows, restaurants and transportation services.

5 The method is particularly well suited for providing targeted advertising to persons staying in hotels, resorts and other rental properties, where the owner of the property subscribes to the advertising method and installs the set top communications boxes 30. The tenants using the TV's in the rooms then receive the advertising. Discounts can be
10 provided to the tenants who view the advertising, in the form of increased savings at the advertiser's business, or a discount off their rental rate for each advertisement viewed.

15 While a specific embodiment of the invention has been shown and described in detail to illustrate the application of the principles of the invention, it will be understood that the invention may be embodied otherwise without departing from such principles.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing advertising to a subscriber through a set top communications box connected to a television, the set top communications box having a
5 connection to a global computer network, the method comprising:

storing icons and associated advertising information on a central server connected to the global computer network;

10 transmitting the icons and associated advertising information to the set top communications box;

displaying an icon on the television screen over a television program using the set top communications box;

15 detecting an input signal indicating the icon has been selected with the set top communications box;

retrieving the advertising information associated with the icon from the set top communications box after detecting the icon was selected;

20 displaying the advertising information on the television screen with the set top communications box.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the advertising information comprises reformatting a television program shown on the television screen and displaying the advertising information in a distinct frame
25 on the television screen.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon over a television program displayed on the television

screen.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein detecting the input signal further comprises generating a no input received signal to the set top communications box after a
5 fixed period of displaying the icon followed by displaying a second icon on the television in place of the icon.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

10 6. A method according to claim 5, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and following detecting one of the icons has been
15 selected, transmitting the associated advertising information to the set top communications box.

7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising displaying the associated advertising information in place of a television program.

20 8. A method according to claim 1, wherein transmitting the icons and associated advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to a memory in the set top communications box for display on the television screen and following detecting one of the icons has been
25 selected, transmitting the associated advertising

information to the set top communications box.

9. A method according to claim 1, wherein detecting the input signal further comprises generating a no input received signal to the set top communications box after a
5 fixed period of displaying the icon followed by displaying a second icon on the television in place of the icon.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the fixed period is between 1 minute and 5 minutes after the icon is first displayed.

10 11. A method according to claim 1, wherein displaying the icon comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon over a television program displayed on the television screen.

15 12. A method of providing advertising information to distributed locations, comprising:

providing a central advertising server connected to a global computer network;

storing a collection of icons and associated advertising information on the central advertising server;

20 providing a communications box at each of a plurality of distributed locations, each communications box having means for communicating with the central advertising server via the global computer network and connected to a television;

25 transmitting the collection of icons and associated advertising information to each of the plurality

of communications boxes via the global computer network;
displaying icons on at least one of the television
screens connected to the plurality of communications boxes;
detecting whether one of the icons has been
5 selected;
displaying associated advertising information on
the television screen in response to a selection of one of
the icons.

13. A method according to claim 12, further comprising
10 providing a distinct electronic address to each
communications box for identifying each communications box
to the server.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein
15 transmitting the collection of icons and associated
advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to
a memory in the set top communications box for display on
the television screen and following detecting one of the
icons has been selected, transmitting the associated
advertising information to the set top communications box.

20 15. A method according to claim 13, wherein displaying
the icons comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon
over a television program on the television screen.

25 16. A method according to claim 12, wherein
transmitting the collection of icons and associated
advertising information comprises transmitting the icons to
a memory in the set top communications box for display on

the television screen and following detecting one of the icons has been selected, transmitting the associated advertising information to the set top communications box.

17. A method according to claim 12, wherein displaying
5 the icons comprises superimposing a semi-transparent icon over a television program on the television screen.

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ABSTRACT

A method of providing advertising from a central database server connected to a global computer network to distributed sites via interactive television. A representative icon is presented to a subscriber on a television screen indicating an advertisement. When a the icon is selected, an advertisement information detail is retrieved from storage in a local memory, or from the central database server and presented to the subscriber on the television screen.

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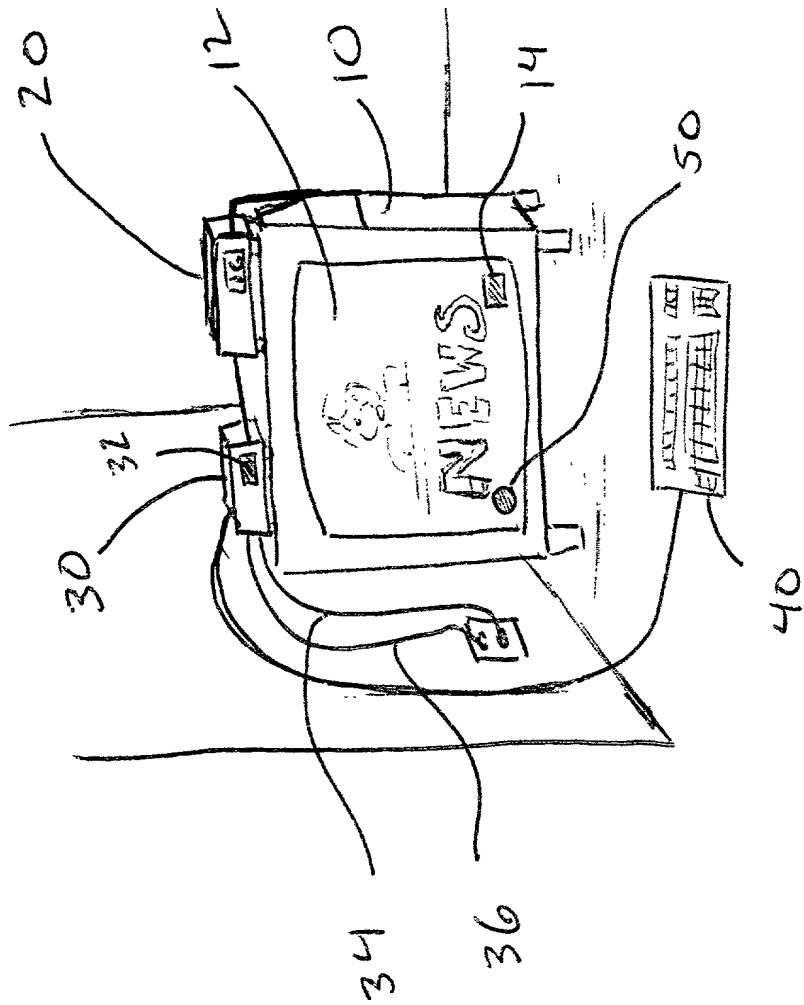


FIG. 1

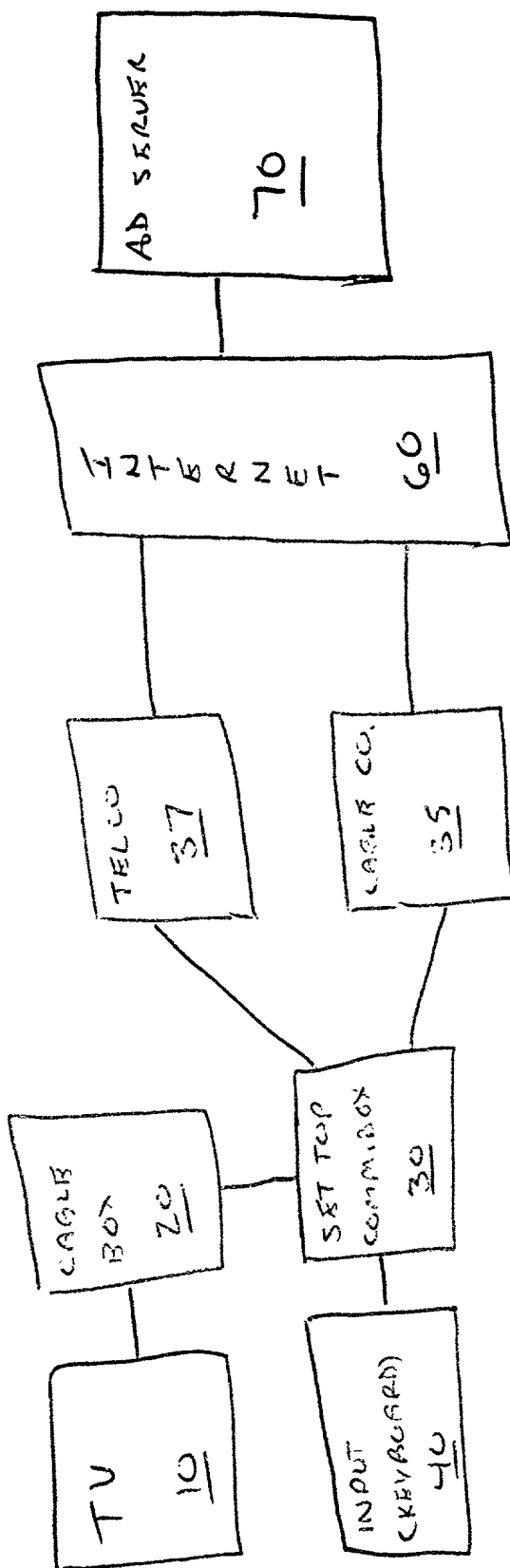


FIG. 2

100
START TV ON

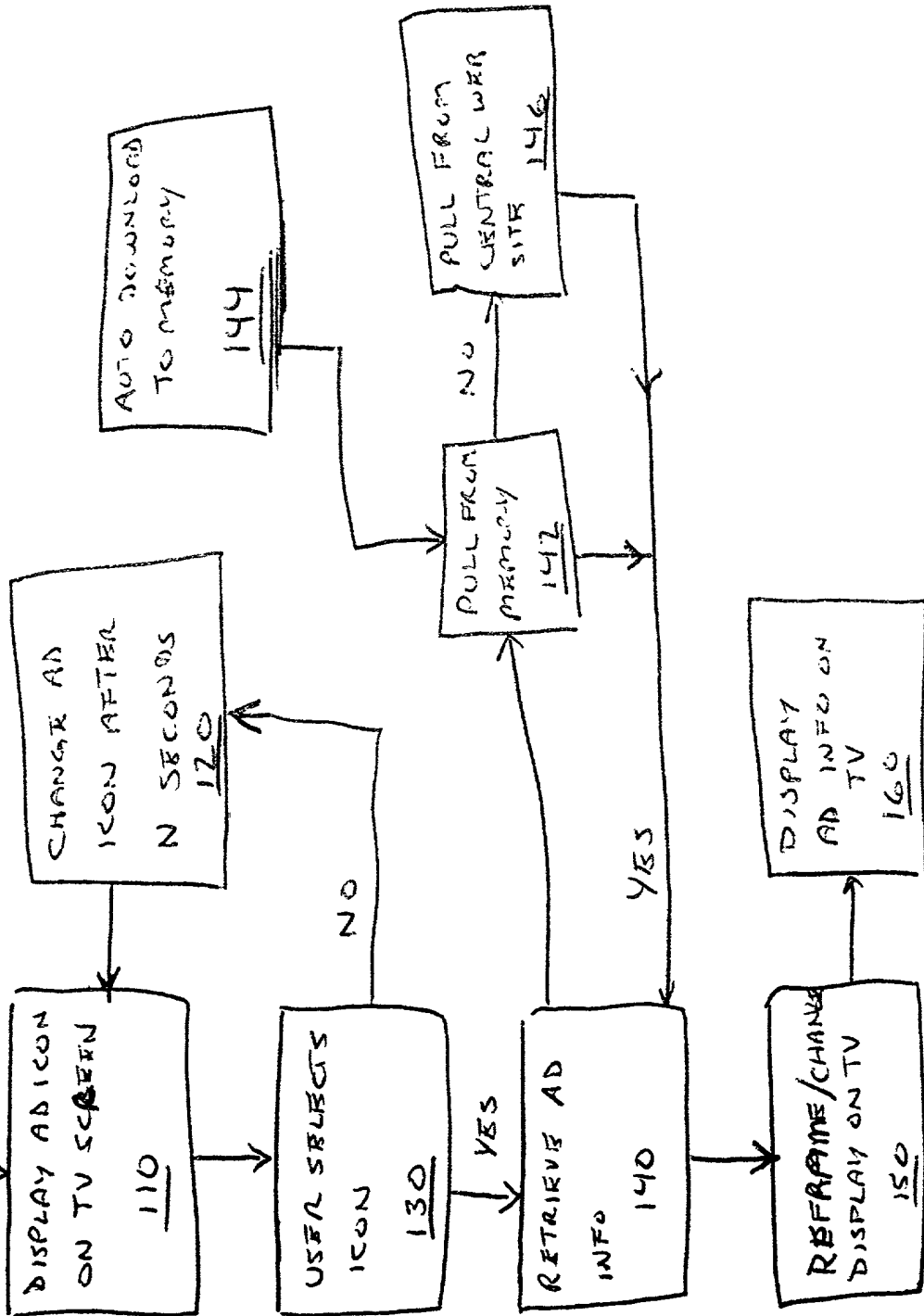


FIG. 3

Atty. Docket No.: K41-002 US

Declaration and Power of Attorney For Patent Application

English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

INTERACTIVE TELEVISION ADVERTISING METHOD

the specification of which (check one):

is attached hereto

was filed on _____ as Application Serial No. _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

<u>Prior Foreign Applications</u>			<u>Priority Claimed</u>	
<u>(Number)</u>	<u>(Country)</u>	<u>(Day/Month/Year Filed)</u>	Yes	No
_____	_____	_____	[]	[]
_____	_____	_____	Yes	No
_____	_____	_____	[]	[]

I hereby claim the benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e) of the following United States Provisional Application:

<u>(Number)</u>	<u>(Day/Month/Year Filed)</u>	<u>Priority Claimed</u>	
_____	_____	Yes	No
_____	_____	[]	[]

Atty. Docket: K41-002 US

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below, and insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

This application is a _____ of U.S. Application

Serial No. Filing Date Status (Patented, Pending, Abandoned)

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY: As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

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